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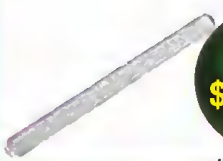

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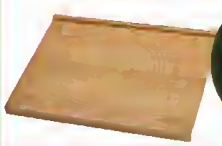

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The Niagara Advance
www.niagaraadvance.ca
Thursday, December 12, 2013

Community consensus:
Keep Parliament Oak open, right–sized and renovated
10

Lyndesfarne presents 'fun, fun show'
39 Steps at Seneca Queen Theatre
28

Rangers report on season
get it online
www.niagaraadvance.ca

Burning of Old Town commemorated

PENNY COLES Niagara Advance

Niagara on Fire, the event commemorating the burning of the town 200 years ago, drew an estimated crowd of more than 3,000 people Saturday evening A 15–minute docudrama about the event that destroyed homes and lives 200 years ago was shown on a huge outdoor screen behind the Court House, while a shorter but effective video played on the front of the Court House. For story see page 17.

Best parade yet coming up Saturday

More than 100 entries, eight marching bands, dogs, horses, clowns and opportunities to help the needy

Penny Coles
Niagara Advance

Expect this Saturday's Niagara-on-the-Lake Christmas Parade, one of the best in the country, will be better than ever, organizers promise.

Marshall for this year's parade will be Jim Smith, local historian and this year's recipient of the Niagara Foundation's Living Landmark Award for his contribution to the preservation of the history of his town.

A parade just wouldn't be a parade without music, says parade organizer Bob Cheriton, and this year there will be eight bands to contribute the sounds of the season.

Returning favorites include the E.L. Crossley Marching Band, the Top Hat Marching Band, the York Lions Steel Band, the incredible Burlington Teen Tour Band. The Ridley College Cadet Corps Band is participating once again after last year's inaugural entry.

See Page 2

Food, mittens to be collected

From Page 1

With more than 100 entries, the parade will also feature tremendous floats put together by local schools, businesses and attractions.

Animals are always a big part of the NOTL parade and this year is no exception. The Upper Canada Equestrian Association, along with Sparkwatch and Sit Down and Stay dog training organizations are among those whose entries feature animals.

And of course, Cheriton says, there will be clowns.

In keeping with the spirit of the season, the entries from NOTL Hydro and Willowbank School for Restoration Arts will feature food drives. Both Hydro and Willowbank urge parade-goers to help ensure more families can celebrate the holidays by bringing along non-perishable food donations.

Also, the local Sparks and Brownies will be collecting mittens, gloves, hats and scarves for Newark Neighbours, NOTL's food bank, which helps needy families at Christmas.

The Fulton Fitness & Downtown Health Centre for Women will be collecting new socks to support the "Out of the Cold" program for the homeless.

As always, representatives of Canada Post will be on hand to accept last minute letters for Santa. They remind you that the correct address for Santa is Santa Claus, North Pole, Canada HOH OHO!

Also, please be sure that return addresses are clearly marked so that the elves can be sure that replies get to the right place.

And new this year, Canada Post will also be collecting items to send to

Canadian military personnel stationed overseas. They are looking for donations of small personal items such as toothbrushes, non-liquid toiletries, socks, playing cars, and gloves.

Santa Claus has a personal message to parents planning on attending this year's NOTL Christmas Parade: He loves to say hi to kids by name, and it would make his job easier if parents could hold a sign behind their children's heads with the names of the children so he could wish them a Merry Christmas, just in case he forgets a name or two.

Even better if parents can keep the sign out of sight of their kids, he adds.

The parade will start at 11 a.m. at King and Centre St. (by Parliament Oak School). It will then weave its way through town to join Queen St. at Simcoe. The parade will finish at the Cenotaph.

"Each year the combination of community-based entries and great bands draw a huge audience to our town in a tremendous celebration of the Christmas season," says Cheriton.

"We take great pride in the fact that this is a community-based event, run by community volunteers and funded by the generous donations of service groups, businesses and individuals in our community."

Bring to the parade:

*NOTL Hydro and Willowbank School of Restoration Arts collecting non-perishable food donations.

*Fulton Fitness &Downtown Health Centre for Women collecting new socks to support the Out of the Cold program for the homeless.

*Representatives of Canada Post accepting last minute letters to Santa as well as small personal items for Canadian Forces personnel stationed overseas.

*Brownies and Sparks will be collecting mittens, gloves, hats and scarves for Newark Neighbours.

Students from Willowbank School of Restoration Arts built a float for last year's parade and also collected food for Newark Neighbours, as they will again Saturday. Advance file photo

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CARRIAGE TRADE

Horwath visits St. Davids to talk job tax credits

Province could pay 20% of wages for new jobs, NDP leader suggests

Penny Coles
Niagara Advance

When Ontario NDP leader Andrea Horwath visited Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery in St. Davids Wednesday, she planned to talk about job creation.

But first, she was given a history lesson on the village by an expert—Ravine owner Paul Harber, whose ancestors introduced farming to the area, built the canning factory that continued to operate until about five years ago, owned the first general store, the quarry that overlooks St. Davids, and the land that was donated for the public school—and who now is living the vision that his parents had for the future of the property that has been in his family's hands for more than 100 years.

Ravine, although it's already expanded since it opened in 2008, isn't finished growing. And when Harber spoke of his ambitions and dreams for the future, Horwath had the answer to help make it happen—the NDP job-creator tax credit.

A decade ago, when St. Davids got its sewer system, the Lowrey family farm—Paul's mother was a Lowrey—was zoned by the town for a residential subdivision, Paul told Horwath. But instead, his parents, Norma Jane and Blair Harber, bought the land from the rest of the family to preserve it from development.

They planted vineyards, rebuilt a 200-year-old historic home to be used as a retail wine store and hospitality centre, opened what has become a popular packing-shed restaurant with locally-sourced cuisine made from organic ingredients, and then expanded with a new production facility and the Canning House, where the produce grown in Ravine gardens is preserved and sold.

Just the kind of forward-thinking family the province needs, said Horwath.

"I can't tell you how much respect I have for you and your family for doing this," she said.

But Paul, a Michelin-trained chef, has a vision that includes more yet: another restaurant on the property, a year-round events facility, a small cannery to process produce from local growers, and even an outdoor rink with ice chillers that would guarantee skating from November to March—not just to attract visitors to the winery, he says, but to give people in the community something to do during the long winter months.

"This is what we want to see more of, these kinds of investments in business," said Horwath, who knows a little bit about farming herself from her youth in Stoney Creek, where her dad grew just enough grapes to make wine for the family.

"That's the kind of rural atmosphere I grew up in, but now those farming families have been replaced by subdivisions."

The vision the Harbers have for expansion is exactly what she hopes to encourage with the NDP tax credits, she said, which would pay 20% of the wages whenever a new job is created.

"We think it could help a lot of small businesses to start up, and to try new initiatives. Job tax credits are a good way to give local businesses a hand up in an economy that isn't so great."

Offering tax credits, as opposed to corporate tax cuts, is more like partnering with businesses, Horwath said.

It's a simple plan, she said, and it applies to any new job, from entry-level to management.

"Business benefits, the economy benefits and Ontario benefits."

Help with wages would be great, agreed Harber, but he told Horwath he'd also like to see incentives that would encourage restaurants, especially the larger ones in Toronto, to buy local.

See Page 4

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No word of Liberal, NDP candidates for byelection to replace Craitor

From Page 3

Consumers are educated and want fresh, organic food sources, but it's an expensive way to do business, he said, suggesting a government-stewarded incentive program fueled by local growers and chefs, such as tax breaks for restaurants that use even 25% home-grown produce.

This is Horwath's fourth visit to Niagara this fall, while the Niagara Falls riding vacated by former Liberal MPP Kim Craitor waits for a byelection to be called, and included a stop at the Grimo Nut Farm on Lakeshore Rd. in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

In October she toured a manufacturing plant, and she attended the final day of the 2013 season of the Fort Erie Race Track. In November, she announced her support of a new hospital for south Niagara from the steps of the Greater Niagara General Hospital in Niagara Falls.

The NDP party has yet to announce a date for a nomination meeting, or the names of candidates who might be vying for the job.

Nor has Karen Gansel, president of the Niagara Falls provincial Liberal riding association, named a Liberal candidate to replace Craitor.

Regional Coun. Bart Maves will represent the Progressive Conservatives when Liberal Premier Kathleen Wynne schedules the byelection to elect an MPP for Niagara Falls, NOTL and Fort Erie.

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Tickets $10/$20 with a CD
*Percentage of proceeds donated to the Hydrocephalus/Spina Bifida Association of Ontario

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

PENNY COLES Niagara Advance

Paul Harber of Ravine Vineyard in St. Davids is passionate about the history of the area, and shares some of it with Ontario NDP leader Andrea Horwath when she visited Ravine to talk about job creation Wednesday. With them outside the historic Woodruff House, now the winery's hospitality centre, is Paul's wife Nicola, events co-ordinator for Ravine.

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The Niagara Advance

BUSINESS PROFILE 2013

Stone Road Grille

With their passion, creativity and love of "funky comfort food," Heidi and Perry Johnson were destined to own a restaurant. The timing was right when they moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake 12 years ago.

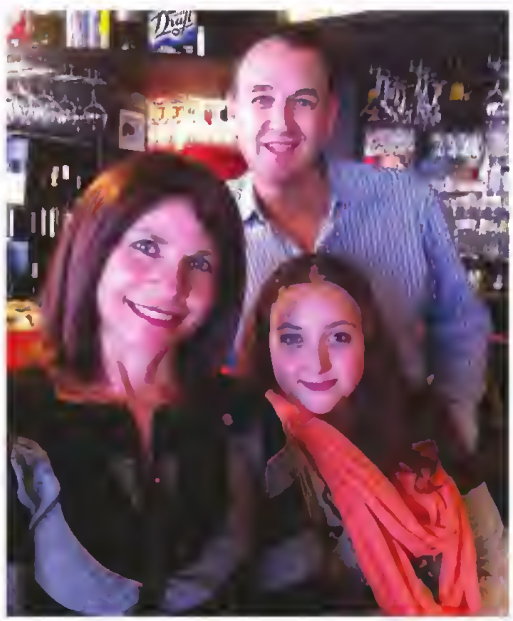
They met while working at The Keg in Winnipeg, which Perry credits with giving them a love of good food and good times. Both went on to other careers – Heidi as a flight attendant and Perry in sales for food and beverage companies. Perry had always wanted to run a restaurant with his wife, but Heidi loved her job.

"I was young and impetuous and full of bravado," when they got married 25 years ago, said Perry. "Heidi was the voice of reason in our relationship. She talked me off that ledge."

The couple relocated to Oakville and shortly after the arrival of their daughter Annika, they moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake. One year later, they opened The Stone Road Grille or the REST, as it is fondly known by local residents.

Perry calls their menu "comfort food with a twist on the classics." The REST uses local produce wherever possible, bakes a variety of sourdough breads and smokes and cures meats and salmon for the charcuterie dish. There is even a cotton candy machine in the kitchen for those who want a nostalgic treat. Many of the menu items change every few weeks, depending on what ingredients are in season and the imagination of the chef, but appetizers like raw oysters and steamed mussels are popular staples. The wines are Niagara VQA and the beer is from a local micro brewery.

The couple is at the REST six days a week to greet guests, and it's not unusual to see them helping out behind the bar, bussing tables or washing dishes. Most of the employees have been with the restaurant for years, but there is a new chef - Justin Lesso, who previously worked for Wellington Court in St. Catharines.



The food choices are left to the chef, but the décor and ambience reflect Heidi and Perry's eclectic personalities and tastes. The red walls, black industrial ceiling and retro chairs and chandeliers make for a comfortable, relaxed environment.

"I'm a bit of a thrifter," said Heidi. "I love second- hand stores and garage sales." All of the restaurant's 60 chairs are painted black and upholstered in a red-patterned fabric, but each one is different. The same goes for the chandeliers.

"We welcome everyone," Heidi said, noting that the REST attracts local residents as well as tourists who are referred by wineries, bed and breakfasts and hotels.

For the last five years, the Johnsons have also run the takeout pizzeria next door called Rest To Go Go. They are now merging the two operations. A few varieties of the gourmet sourdough pizza will be added to the menu at the REST and the kitchen will be opened up for guests to watch the chefs at work.

"We started this restaurant for the locals. If you haven't been in for awhile, come on back and give us a try," Perry said. "See what has changed or try us for the first time."

Reservations are recommended and it's not too late to book group Christmas parties.

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opinion page

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our editorial

Parliament Oak parents show determination

The parents of Parliament Oak are in no doubt about what's best for their kids, and they have support from the community. But is that enough?

To begin with, let's get the negativity out in the open and then leave it behind.

Those who were involved in the review that ended with the closure of Niagara District Secondary School will recognize many of the same well-reasoned and well-researched rationales for keeping the elementary school open. And the recommendation from that accommodation review committee was to keep the high school open. We know how that ended. There is no high school in town.

Most, although not all, of the trustees on the school board who will deal with the recommendation from this review committee are the same trustees who made the decision to close NDSS. Their mandate then, as now, was to eliminate surplus seats, and how much easier for them to do that in Niagara-on-the-Lake than in St. Catharines, where the majority of their votes come from.

With that said—let's get to the positive side of this very difficult situation for parents of all children in NOTL, and for all of us who want the best for students in all parts of town.

The parents and community of Parliament Oak did an amazing job of making all the right arguments.

They cited reports that indicate smaller schools are better for students.

They reminded trustees of the top results their students have received in the annual provincial testing.

They spoke of the detrimental effect of not enforcing school boundaries, of offering free busing to students so they can attend other schools, of busing kids who should be able to walk to school.

They even found reports from other school boards that indicate closing schools can end up costing more, not saving money.

And, perhaps most convincingly, they disputed, time and again, the numbers for projected enrolment the school board is using in its report to show school populations in NOTL will decline.

And the parents of Crossroads and St. Davids have backed up the speakers with evidence that their schools are also close to capacity, with enrolment that will continue to grow. Several of the speakers questioned where the board gets their statistics, and why they aren't listening—especially when some of those speaking are at least as expert in the field of population projection as those on the board planning staff.

In fact, it was the Town planner, who sits on the accommodation review committee, who questioned the numbers the board is using at the very first meeting and still seems dissatisfied with the answers. Surely he would be in a better position to know than anyone how many housing starts to expect in the Old Town, Virgil and St. Davids, and to question the assumption that few of those houses in the Old Town will become home to families with young children.

Our Old Town residential neighbourhood, like those in other parts of town, is attracting a mix of people, and according to the number of new students at Parliament Oak, some of them are young families.

That was backed up by a real estate agent who has no personal interest in the school, other than that it will be needed by the young families he sells homes to, couples who are choosing to move from larger cities and who can work from home.

The next meeting of the accommodation review committee isn't until Jan. 8, at which time members will have to focus on what they want to present to the board as their recommendation. The public has one more chance to speak to the review committee after that, on Jan. 22, before the recommendation is finalized.

And then it gets even more interesting. We learn whether board staff endorses the committee recommendation and sends it to the trustees, or whether they come up with something completely different.

Then begin the opportunities for parents to attend board meetings and address the trustees.

And the public finds out whether the trustees are listening, and what they choose to do about what they're hearing.

Niagara of the Past

This is a picture of the William Steward House on Butler St. when it was owned by Peggy Anderson, the founder of Newark Neighbours. The Niagara Foundation bought this house to rescue it from development when she died and restored it to its original condition—it looks very different now, and is again privately owned. The house was built circa 1835 for William Steward, a Black teamster, on property originally granted to Andrew Butler, one of Lieutenant-Colonel John Butler's troops.

Photo by Roddy Heading, Jim Smith Collection

letters to the editor

Message to parents who plan to take kids to parade

This is a message to parents who plan to take their kids to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Christmas Parade.

It would really help Santa if parents could hold a sign behind their children's head with the names of the children.

It is nice for Santa to wish a Merry Christmas to children by name, or to just say hello to them addressing them by name.

Of course if the parents could keep the sign out of sight from their children Santa would look really good.

Just a message passed along from Santa.

Ho Ho Ho and Merry Christmas.

Ward Simpson

opinion

letters to the editor

Hydro One misleads in efforts to buy local utilities

I share the following information and thoughts on the belief that the majority of people in Niagara-on-the-Lake and hopefully throughout Ontario will start to demand accountability from those making decisions that are harmful to both the short and long-term well-being of our province.

Both items I will cover are costing Ontarians hundreds of millions of dollars and will cost substantially more in the years to come unless some new direction is taken.

First, there is an effort by Hydro One, with the support of the provincial government, through the Ministry of Energy, to purchase small to medium local utilities under the guise that this will create a savings for customers through a more efficient deliver system.

This is in complete disregard for the fact that many of the smaller and medium-size local utilities are more efficient than the large utility companies when the only measurement that really counts (the final monthly billing) is compared.

For example, NOTL's current rate for the average residential customer is $125.54 versus Toronto Hydro's $130.69 and Hydro One's, for a combination rural/urban mix similar to NOTL, $152.61. In the case of Hydro One, this is after our subsidization of their rates on our monthly bills through the rural rate allowance.

Yet Hydro One is using a consultant to contact virtually every small to medium local distribution company in Ontario and offer their owners, usually the municipality, prices that bear no relationship to the intrinsic value nor historical sales of similar sized utilities.

The offered prices are tens of millions of dollars higher than any competing entity could or would offer. The customers and municipalities are also offered a freeze in rates for up to five years, no cuts in jobs, etc.

A rational person might ask how can the most inefficient distribution operation afford to do this and where is the money coming from to do it and who is condoning this activity. The answers are "they can't", "we don't know where the money is coming from" and "the provincial government."

We should all seek, if not demand, better answers to these questions. Your board of directors and the management team of NOTL Hydro are seeking the answers to these questions through our intervention in Hydro One's purchase of Norfolk Power, the first step in Hydro One's acquisition movement.

We must ensure that you, our customers, and the ultimate owners of our business are not further burdened by being asked to fund ill-conceived business decisions either through direct or hidden charges.

The second item I will share is the hidden cost in your monthly hydro bill which is growing like a cancer and will continue to grow unless a change in direction is made.

It is an item called the "global adjustment" which is buried in your time-of-use rates. Global adjustment is defined as "the difference between total payments made to certain contracted or regulated generators/demand management projects and market revenues".

In layman's language this means paying higher than market prices to generators of electricity. To give you an idea of the magnitude of the problem the monthly global adjustment for November 2008 was $58.4 million. The monthly global adjustment for November 2013 was $884.4 million . . .monthly adjustment.

This will continue to grow unless a conscious decision is made to stop. Much of the damage is irreversible based on the signing of long term contracts.

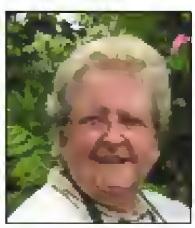
Unless there is a public effort/demand to put the management of Ontario's electrical system back on a fiscally sound path and led by people without a political agenda we are in a serious position of creating a living and business environment that is unattractive and unsustainable.

I urge you to contact whomever you feel holds accountability to you and seek their commitment to change our direction.

Jim Ryan
Chair
NOTL Hydro

Reflections on Christmases past and the gift of volunteering

Gift of time brings reward of wonderful memories



Jean Cochrane
Happy Gardening

Christmas is my favourite time of the year.

I love Christmas. Christmas decorations and Christmas cards. But I will not buy a card that does not say Christmas. It is not just the festive season, because Jesus is the reason for the season.

There is a feeling in the air for me at this time, and it is not about 'getting' but about 'giving.'

I have never been rich so any dreams of distributing gifts to all have never happened, but what I and hundreds of others have been able to do is give the gift of our time.

Think on all the events we enjoy that can only happen because someone gives the gift of their time. Participation means work for whatever cause you get involved in, but oh the wonderful memories when you look back.

Think on all the wonderful Christmas parades we enjoy. It was only after I participated, by helping construct a float for our Sunday School, that I realized the huge amount of work involved.

We had designed the stable, and around the perimeter of the float were straw bales to keep the children safe. There was the whole nativity tableau, with shepherds and several angels, all warmly clad and complete with halos and wings.

We had three horseback riders in wonderful regalia, representing the Three Kings. Some of the congregation followed on, dressed as desert nomads, to keep an eye on the children and sing carols.

The parade was formed by floats lined up on one of the side streets, bands on another, then marchers, etc. on others. Then these clever people with the walkie-talkies marshalled each unit into position. It was the equivalent of an army maneuver and must have taken tremendous planning.

Now the fact that horses were part of our unit meant we had to have a pooper scooper and so a brave volunteer was there, resplendent in robes and complete with wheelbarrow and shovel.

He took up his post and we were all set to go. Then one of the horses wouldn't move—he did not like bands. We had to get him out of the area of the noise, so he was taken home—slight change of story, it was now the Two Kings.

During a quiet lull, one of the Sunday School teachers announced rather longingly, "I always wanted to play Mary." Since she was by then a married woman with a family, there was a quick retort, "You're a little late for that, dear."

We were in place, all singing carols, all was well—when a fight broke out between the angels—pilgrims to the rescue, peace resumed.

Then one of our pilgrims called the alert—the riders ahead of us had not been vigilant in the scooping department.

"Well," comes the reply, "just be glad we are not wearing sandals."

That is how it went, happy banter, singing carols, waving to friends, all having a great time. It was a bitterly cold day but our hearts were warm.

The gift you are given may not be boxed, wrapped or tied with ribbon, but it comes from the hearts of thousands of volunteers.

Whether the parade is on your own Queen St. or national TV, someone is wishing you a Merry Christmas.

What they receive in return are the smiles on the faces of children of all ages.

Merry Christmas to all.

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Town Flag on Sale

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is pleased to announce the new Town flag is now available for sale to the public.

The flag, which sports a historical Union Jack and the new Town shield, is 24" x 48" with grommets. The purchase price is $40 (including taxes) and is available at the Customer Service Counter at Town Administration Offices, 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil.

Christmas Holiday Hours

Please note the Town Administration Offices will be closed for the Christmas Holidays at 12:00 noon on Tuesday, December 24, 2013, and will re-open at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, January 2, 2014. During this time, please call **905-468-3278** for Public Works-related inquiries. For emergencies, please call 911. The Christmas Holiday Skating Schedule is available on the Town's website or by calling the Arena at **905-468-4261.**

On behalf of Town Council and staff, we wish all residents a joyous and safe holiday season.

TEMPORARY TRANSIT BUS DETOUR
Saturday, December 14th, 2013

To accommodate the Niagara-on-the-Lake Christmas Parade, NOTL Transit will be rerouting buses in the Old Town as shown on the attached map.

This detour will commence on Saturday, Dec. 14th, 2013 with the 9:42 a.m. departure from the Community Centre. Regular service will resume with the 2:42 p.m. departure from the Community Centre on the same day.

Please call (905) 468-3278 x270 for more information if required.

2014 budget to hike taxes by less than 2%

Suzanne Mason
QMI Agency Niagara

Town councillors will consider the proposed 2014 budget prepared by staff next Monday that could see the municipal portion of property taxes increase by just under 2 %.

A budget presentation by treasurer Brenda Garrett was on the committee of the whole agenda Monday, but the meeting was cancelled due to a lack of a quorum.

As a result, staff reports recommending approval of the operating and capital budgets will go directly to council next week.

Council had directed staff in September to prepare an operating budget that did not exceed a 2% increase in the municipal levy. The recommended tax hike for the proposed $7.8 million budget is 1.94%.

Staff reported that there were a number of challenges for meeting the targeted budget increase including a $131,000 decrease in the Ontario Municipal Partnership Funding from the province and salary and benefit increases.

Staff also recommended approval in principle of a capital budget of $9.6 million for 2014 for about 90 projects.

"The town's reserve funds are growing," staff reported. "Overall... the town's reserve funds are well-positioned to fund the town's present and future capital projects."

Council to approve discretionary grants

Council is expected to approve a discretionary grant budget of $243,000 for 2014 Monday.

Topping the list of the Discretionary Grant Committee's recommendations is t$93,740 for the Niagara Historical Society and Museum. The Shaw Festival Theatre will receive $23,500 for marketing if the grants are approved; the Chamber of Commerce receives $30,000 as a fee for service agreement for the tourism centre at Fort George. Niagara College receives $20,000 as an annual refund on taxes.

The Niagara District Airport will receive $18,948 from the Town in accordance with its responsibility as one of three municipalities supporting the airport.

Other organizations granted lesser amounts include the NOTL Palliative Care Service, Riverbrink Art Museum, the Friends of Fort George, the Niagara Pumphouse Art Centre, the Niagara Workers Welcome Concert, the Market at the Village, the Chamber of Commerce Peach Celebration, the Royal Canadian Legion and Music Niagara.

The Lincoln County Humane Society, the Niagara Hot Air Balloon Festival, a group working on a native memorial at Queenston Heights, St. Mark's Church, the Village Community Association and Niagara Nursery School applied for grants but the committee is recommending they be rejected.

"NIAGARA ON FIRE" DVD ON SALE $10.00 AT THESE LOCATIONS

- **Town of NOTL Offices**
  1593 Four Mile Creek Rd., Virgil
- **Friends of Fort George Gift Shop**
- **Niagara Historical Society & Museum**
  43 Castlereagh Street, NOTL

PENNY COLES Niagara Advance

Karen Roma (top left) and her fiancé Robert Plantic, Nick Roma and his girlfriend Kara Brown settle in for a horse and carriage ride leading Friday's Candlelight Stroll through the streets of the Old Town. The proceeds of this year's stroll will help Roma with medical expenses on his long road ahead as he battles cancer and learns to adjust to prosthetic hands and feet, after losing his to severe septic shock while being treated for acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Lord Mayor Dave Eke and his wife Debbie also participated in the stroll. Singing for the strollers was the choir at Grace United Church.

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Community speaks with one voice: Keep Parliament Oak open

Board urged to take another look at numbers for future enrolment

Penny Coles
Niagara Advance

The community spoke with one voice and the message was clear: don't close Parliament Oak.

And for so many reasons—the most important of which is the students, but also, some pointed out, because despite the District School Board of Niagara's goal of saving money by reducing empty seats, closing the Old Town school would end up costing money.

Disputed by many of the 30 people who spoke at a public meeting Wednesday, crowded into the learning commons at Crossroads Public School, are the school board's numbers that show future enrolment declining in both school districts.

Several speakers, including Phil Lambert, a Crossroads parent and an engineer who works for the Niagara Region, offered evidence the population is increasing in both the Old Town and Virgil.

Lambert's job at the Region has him monitoring housing starts and the capacity of NOTL's wastewater treatment plant—numbers that while very different from enrolment also reflect population growth. Residential development over the next 10 to 20 years should deliver more than 200 elementary-aged school children to the two schools under review, he said.

Parliament Oak parent Sam Ridesic urged board staff to have another look at enrolment projections.

"Let's get the demand profile for the next 10 years right."

He warned trustees that "some of the biggest companies in the world go bankrupt because they don't see market trends. Closing Parliament Oak makes no sense to me."

Parents from Parliament Oak, many of them professionals who said they have moved from Toronto, Oakville and other areas so their children could grow up in a small community and attend a neighbourhood school they could walk to, told the accommodation review committee they don't need or want a shiny new school or anything more than what they already have. They want their school, which well out-performed others in this year's Grade 3 and Grade 6 provincial testing, a school where they know the principal and teachers and other parents, and where their kids are comfortable and well-cared for.

Several asked for right-sizing and renovating of the school to 200 students, which helps solve the problem of excess capacity for the school board, and a 10-year moratorium before another accommodation review.

The moratorium, said parent Gray Powell, "is critical to creating the stability needed to drive enrolment," receiving applause the his request from the 200-plus people at the meeting.

Joy Janzen, co-chair of the Parliament Oak parent council, spoke of the ARC process which spared the school last go-round, but in doing so divided the community. It also concerns parents that review recommendations, which had asked for Niagara District Secondary School to be kept open, can be ignored.

"There are residual feelings of fustration and distrust that the ARC has any significance, and that the end result has already been decided by senior administration."

But Parliament Oak parents are determined that the outcome this time will be different, she said.

Parents cited study after study, some the province's own reports, showing students at small schools are better off in many ways than students in larger schools, generally considered more than 400 students, which Crossroads is already at.

Parents also referenced studies that show amalgamation of schools doesn't necessarily result in financial savings and that in many cases economies of scale create just the opposite effect, costing more in the long term.

In addition to Parliament Oak parents' well-reasoned, extensively-researched and co-ordinated submissions, parents representing both Crossroads and St. Davids elementary schools also spoke in favour of keeping the Old Town school open. They believe their schools are near capacity, and new development in both areas will bring more kids than the schools can accommodate without adding Old Town students.

Nettie Herbst, a Crossroads parent, warned trustees that if the school receives another 100 students and the expansion needed to accommodate them, they'll lose their soccer field to an addition and more tarmac, which is already crowded, and will need more parking—there isn't enough room for parking now, she said.

Lianne Lambert told the review committee she finds it frustrating that the board built Crossroads just two years ago, with capacity that would allow for a slight increase in enrolment. Now the school is full and the board is considering busing another 100 students from the Old Town, she said.

"It seems like poor planning to me—there's no other way to look at it. An addition may end up being necessary just for the new homes in Virgil. It seems like short-term decisions are going to end up costing more."

She also said it was a mistake not to include St. Davids Public School in the review, and asked, if Parliament Oak does close, "please don't send all the students to Crossroads."

Rochelle Dickenson, a St. Davids parent, said she and others from her school community feel excluded from a discussion and decisions that will impact their school.

See page 11

the epicurean
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Demographics are changing because parents can choose to work from home

From Page 10

There is a "misunderstanding" that there is capacity for more students at St. Davids, when there isn't enough room now in the primary grade area, she said.

Busing students from the Old Town to St. Davids "has tangible implications. It might just feel like it's numbers you're discussing but these are real children. It feels like there hasn't been a lot of foresight."

Community members and business people also spoke on the importance of keeping the school open.

"The demographics are changing because technology is changing at an exponential rate," said real estate agent Perry Quinn, adding that more and more people can and do work from home now.

PENNY COLES Niagara Advance

Parent Deanna Simpson told the accommodation review committee the group of parents and community members representing Parliament Oak want the school open, right-sized, renovated and with policy directives that support enrolment.

"Young people with families are interested in getting out of the city and moving to more rural communities, and they have the ability to do so."

The "aging population" demographic is doing an about-face, Quinn told trustees and board staff, "and I don't understand why your group isn't seeing that."

Chamber of Commerce executive director Janice Thomson also addressed her comments to board trustees, asking them to take into consideration the importance of community to children.

In addition to dealing with hard figures, she said, trustees carry the responsibility of factoring the cost of their decisions to those within the community.

"The taxpayers of NOTL pay dearly for their education system and should be entitled to see their families grow through the school system within their community," she said.

She pointed to the accommodation review that precipitated the closure of the high school, when board staff claimed the number of high school students in town had declined.

"As we pointed out at the time, the demographics had not shifted, the DSBN had simply allowed students from NOTL to have free bus service to schools outside of the community—schools that were receiving advantageous programming that in the end drained our school of students," said Thomson.

"It appears that history is repeating itself now, with Parliament Oak School being a rarity today in that full-day kindergarten is not offered at the school, encouraging parents to have their children register in other grade schools."

She pointed out that the board's analysis of enrolment numbers was flawed during the last accommodation review, and asked board staff "to get it right this time. Find ways to keep this school open, not ways to close it."

Thomson suggested the financial benefits of closing Laura Secord, Colonel John Butler, Virgil and NDSS, and the sale of school properties, should be directed toward making "something positive happen for Parliament Oak."

Paul Shepherd, past president of the Niagara Foundation, said his organization is not only interested in saving historic monuments and buildings, but in the ambience, culture and institutions of the community.

Retaining an elementary school in the heart of the Old Town is necessary for keeping it vibrant, attracting young families and preventing it from becoming a "museum piece," said Shepherd.

Sandra Cowan, an active supporter of NDSS during the last accommodation review, said one of the differences this time round is that all NOTL communities are showing a united front.

"This is a large group of people all saying the same thing," she said. "This time there's consensus."

Parent Tony Gazzard warned the committee that Parliament Oak parents are committed to keeping their school open.

"We don't think tonight is the end of the process," he said.

Parents are prepared to Toronto and to speak to the Minister of Education and the Premier, if necessary, he added.

"We are determined to represent our children to the best of our ability. We will do everything we can, not only for our children of our community, but for the children yet to come."

CELEBRATE NYE 2013

DINNER PARTY 6:00pm - 9:00pm

6-7PM COCKTAIL AND HORS D'OUEVRES
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7PM DINNER

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Honey, lavender goat cheese, sun-dried tomato, mustard seed dressing, sea salt and vinegar russet potato chips

THE MAIN
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THE GARRISON HOUSE

Helping prisoners of conscience

Amnesty sends greeting cards to prisoners and letters to their captors asking for their release

Penny Coles
Niagara Advance

This year during the Niagara-on-the-Lake Christmas Parade, Amnesty International's local branch will be celebrating Human Rights Day and hosting Write for Rights in the Parish Hall of St. Mark's Church on Byron Street.

The parade starts at 11 a.m. this Saturday, Dec. 14, but Amnesty International Group 137 members will be at the Parish Hall Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Members ask for help sending Christmas cards to prisoners of conscience around the world, and signing letters calling for their release.

The cards go to prisoners to let them know they are not forgotten, and letters are sent to promote the release of prisoners who have never advocated violence but are imprisoned because of their political beliefs.

The letters work, says JL Groux of the local amnesty branch.

"Every year we hear of thousands being released, so we know the letters are effective," he says.

The letters also may help reduce the torture of those prisoners, since their captors know the world is paying attention to them, he said.

There will be coffee, hot chocolate and cookies at St. Mark's, and children are welcome.

PENNY COLES Niagara Advance

Local Amnesty members Daina Meusel, JL Groux, Will Wilson and Leib Wolofsky, with Lord Mayor Dave Eke, raise the flag at the Town Hall for Amnesty International Human Rights Day, which is Dec. 10.

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See how soldiers, officers lived

Have you ever wondered what winter was like in a British fort during the War of 1812?

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Fort George National Historic Site will be open for a Garrison Christmas this Saturday, Dec. 14, with special activities reminiscent of Christmases past.

The fort will also be open on weekends from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. all winter.

Explore the soldiers' barracks and officers' quarters, cozy up to a roaring fire, enjoy speaking with the costumed staff, musket demonstrations and more. Experience the life of a garrison in a country at war.

The Friends of Fort George Gift Shop offers a cup of hot chocolate before you head into the fort, with a selection of gifts and souvenirs.

For more information on contact Parks Canada at 905-468-6614, ont-niagara@pc.gc.ca

For information on the Gift Shop, contact the Friends of Fort George at 905-468-6621, or visit giftshop@friendsoffortgeorge.ca.

The Friends of Fort George will present A Garrison Christmas Saturday. Fort George will be open weekends all winter. Photo supplied

Music Niagara to banish stress and humbug for NOTL holiday season

Chris Blake
Special to the Advance

Music Niagara serves up a special Christmas treat in concert form at Small Talk Vineyards Saturday afternoon.

It's an upbeat variety show designed to lift the spirits and banish every last bit of humbug and stress from the town.

Headlining the show will be Fort Erie's favourite son and winner of Bravo TV's Bathroom Diva contest Elton Lammie with his Kitchen Party Band.

Lammie is a formidable entertainer, with a range of vocal skills that runs from country to opera and opry and just about everything in between.

Also performing with be the wildly entertaining James McKie with his Scotch Mary band - a dynamic and eclectic trio based in Toronto and rooted in traditional Celtic music.

The band is comprised of McKie on fiddle and vocals, Sean O'Connor on flute and accordion, and Michael O'Grady on vocals, acoustic guitar, and tin whistle.

See Page 15

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ORCHARD PARK BIBLE CHURCH

Classic seasonal songs included

Elton Lammie and his Kitchen Party Band will headline a Music Niagara Concert this Saturday at 2 p.m. at Small Talk Vineyards. Photo supplied

From Page 14

The group's members have toured in different formations, playing house parties and concert halls throughout Ireland, England, France, all over Europe, Canada and the US.

To offer a slightly more traditional Christmas element Toronto soprano Grace Lee will present some classic seasonal songs. Lee has performed very successfully with Music Niagara and is in the Performance Diploma Program at The Glenn Gould School of Music.

To round out the program Canadian jazz pianist John Sherwood will burn up the piano keys and be joined by Arik Arakelyan, a young saxophonist who plays in the classical and jazz modes equally enthusiastically.

Atis Bankas, artistic director of Music Niagara, has suggested that there may also be a surprise performance from a supremely gifted, extraordinarily successful young Music Niagara audience favourite.

The concert is Saturday, Dec. 14 at 2 p.m.

Tickets are $30 and are available in advance through the Music Niagara office at 905-468-5566 or at the door at Small Talk Vineyards (formerly Stonechurch) at 1242 Irvine Rd.

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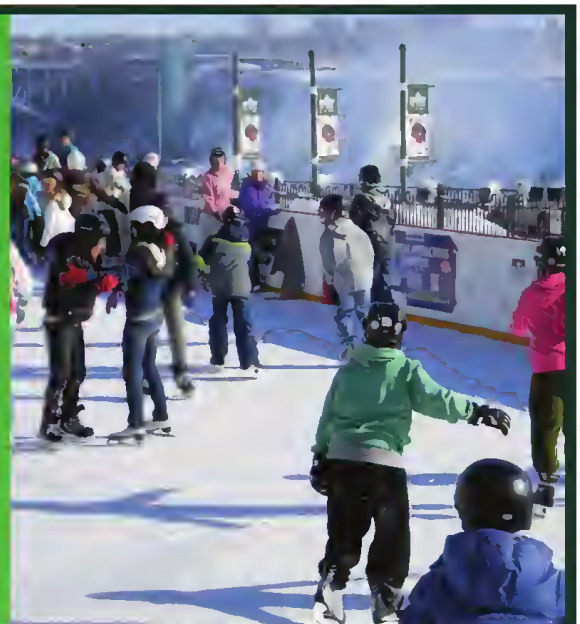

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3rd Annual 2013 Red Roof Retreat Gifts from the Heart Holiday Campaign

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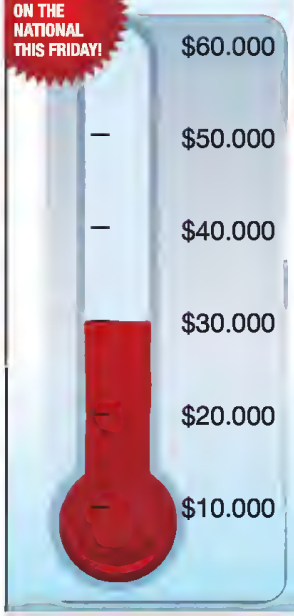

Help us Help others!

Generous community support has always been foremost to Red Roof Retreat's continuing success. We're so grateful to have such wonderful assistance from our community who we consider to be a significant part of our growing family. Each year we are touched by their thoughtfulness and generosity. Every donation, both small and large, helps us continue to improve our programs and serve many more families.

Red Roof Retreat

Donations can be made through the Red Roof Retreat website at http://www.redroofretreat.com or by calling the office at (905)684.0235.

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PENNY COLES Niagara Advance

Decorated for the season is RiverBrink Art Museum, which took part in the 15th annual NOTL Rotary Club Holiday House Tour. Debra Antoncic, curator of RiverBrink, admires the work of the Holiday Tour decorators. The museum is open during the winter Wednesday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. RiverBrink, on the Niagara River Parkway at Queenston St., specializes in art works by Canadian and international artists, assembled by Samuel Weir and left as a collection for the public to enjoy.

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The gentle story of a marriage and how music can make a broken heart whole again. With Vanessa Redgrave and Terence Stamp.

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Niagara-on-the-Lake

Queen St. named one of top 20 by tourism website

Architecture, view of lake, restaurants and boutique stores help earn rating

The tourism website Vaca.ca has named Queen St. in Niagara-on-the-Lake No. 14 of the top 20 streets in Canada.

It even mentioned last weekend's Niagara on Fire event, with a short history lesson of the War of 1812 and the burning of the town.

To find out the other top locations visit http://vacay.ca/2013/11/top-20-streets-in-canada-vive-quebec/.

From the Vaca.ca website, Why Queen St. Rocks: "The architecture and views of the lake are the things that will quickly grab you, with the lovely Prince of Wales Hotel (6 Picton Street) book-ending the east end of the street and a scenic view on the west side.

"A tourist's dream, Queen Street has everything charming, from horse-drawn carriages to ice cream, fine dining, spas and boutique stores."

The website goes on to mention some of the top attractions in town, including history tours and ghost walks.

It also singles out a few of the Queen Street restaurants and lists mouth-watering menus.

And the "hidden gem" in town?

According to Vaca.ca, it's the Niagara Apothecary Museum on Queen St., "an authentic museum restoration of a 1869 pharmacy as part of a practice that operated in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, from 1820 to 1964."

Also, it says, not to miss Queen's Royal Park, where on a good day you can see the CN Tower.

Vacay.ca deputy editor Rod Charles says Queen St. "is a beautiful street to visit anytime of the year, but it's especially beautiful in warm weather. Go for a walk and try everything that you can, taste everything you can, see everything you can."

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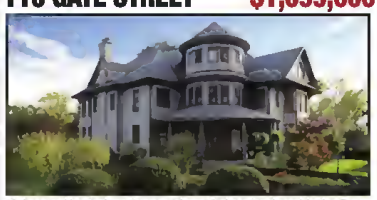
2 EVERGREEN LANE $613,500

Showcasing quality built freehold townhomes consisting of 18 units located in prime location of old town. Luxury high end finishes include hardwood on main floor, granite counter tops in kitchen, tile and glass main floor bathrooms, interlocked driveways and professional landscaping. **MLS # N30019392. Thomas Elltoft and Kim Elltoft**

14541 NIAGARA RIVER PARKWAY $849,000

Georgian-style two storey home set back from the road and situated on a private ravine lot with mature trees. Features include large principal rooms, 9 ft ceilings, oak hardwood flooring, newly renovated bathroom, and attached double garage. **MLS N30026643. Thomas Elltoft and Viviana Elltoft.**

116 GATE STREET $1,699,000



Truly an architectural masterpiece, charm & character abound in this Queen Anne revival. This outstanding home modelling approximately 7,000 sq.ft. of finished living space was built in 2001 by current owners who envisioned a space where the entire family would gather & spend time together. It is certainly a house to be called 'home' **MLS# N30025084. Thomas Elltoft and Kim Elltoft.**

450 QUEEN STREET $2,695,000

This home is the result of a vision to live simply but elegantly, to create an oasis for art, entertaining and family while connecting all rooms to the outdoors. The views from the front and sides of the property overlooking the golf course and lake are breathtaking. Fabulous guest house, summer kitchen, pool and Zen gardens. 6650 sq. ft. **MLS # N30018726. Bonnie Grimm.**

175 QUEEN STREET #2 $699,000

Custom designed elegant open concept town home located in the heart of town. Features three bedrooms, 3+ bath, finished lower level, private garden. Many extra features, a rare find! **MLS# N30021360. Victoria Bolduc.**

83 THE PROMENADE $659,000

Beautiful bungalow custom built by Carmel Construction. Enjoy an easy walk to shopping, theatres and dining. The finishes on this special home are exceptional! Builder will finish the basement at cost. **MLS# N30001447. Chris Bowron and Audrey Wright.**

20 CRIMSON DR. $359,000

St Davids! Nearly new attractive end unit town home. Spacious foyer leading to open concept kitchen/living/breakfast room then to covered balcony at the rear. 2 bed home on a quiet street benefits from a walk-out basement with spacious family room. Master bed has an attractive en-suite bathroom and a walk-in closet. The 2nd bedroom off the foyer is currently used as a diningroom, accessed through French doors. ** Condo street with $120.00/month charge for snow cleaning and grass cutting ** **MLS# N30026512. Kevin Stokes.**

1329 YORK ROAD $309,000

Lovely 2 storey home in the heart of St. Davids. Home is close to all amenities and activities with an elementary school across the street. This home has a great country kitchen with French doors that lead to a beautiful deck and very private backyard. **MLS# N30025086 Cheryl Carmichael & Trish Badham.**

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Niagara on Fire 'spectacular'

Penny Coles
Niagara Advance

It was meant to be a legacy event, and it will be.

The video of Niagara on Fire, scripted, acted, filmed and produced by local volunteers to commemorate the burning of Niagara 200 years ago, was shown to about 3,000 people Saturday evening, and was judged "spectacular" by many who experienced it.

And an experience it was. In addition to the 15-minute video on an enormous outdoor screen behind the Court House that documents the burning of the town through the eyes of a woman who lived through the terrifying event as a little girl, there were flame machines on either side of the screen erupting every few minutes, there were flames projected on the front of the Court House, there was a fog machine that simulated smoke curling around buildings and drifting down the street, and fireworks were set off several times during the evening.

The event was three years in the making and involving hundreds of hours of work by local volunteers to commemorate the torching of the town on a cold winter's night 200 years ago, as the American militia retreated.

The video brought kudos from the audience members, many of whom lined up inside the Court House Market Room following the showings to purchase a $10 video.

"Spectacular" was the word repeated by Lord Mayor Dave Eke, who was impressed with the quality of the video and the dedication of the volunteers who organized the event.

All of the events commemorating the War of 1812 bicentennial were designed to bring history to life, and have done so, he said.

Saturday's video was amazing, he added, and brought out a good crowd who seemed to enjoy the atmosphere, and could relate to the event that took place on a bitter day in December, 1813, he said.

See Page 20

Niagara on Fire was shown on a 20–foot screen to about 3,000 people in the Court House parking lot Saturday evening.

GREETINGS OF THE SEASON

Thank your customers, friends and neighbours for their patronage over the past year and show them your Christmas spirit by wishing everyone the best the season has to bring!

Publication Date: Thursday, December 19th
Deadline: Friday, December 13th

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The Niagara Advance

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Burning a 'first class event'

From Page 18

"The video really indicated what people were going through 200 years ago, and we can all relate to that. It really was a good portrayal of what it was like at that time, when the town was burned. It was very realistic, " said Eke.

During the last two years of bicentennial commemorations, he said, "we've been able to piece together what happened 200 years ago. People are learning more about their history and their roots. The 1812 committee has tried to present each event as a reliving of history, and their organization and attention to detail has been phenomenal."

Saturday's Niagara on Fire, he said, "was a first-class event. Tony (Chisholm) did a magnificent job, with his attention to detail, his patience, and his ability to relate to others and motivate them made it a success."

What's important to remember, as we commemorate the events that were so significant to our community, " is the celebration of 200 years of peace that followed. That's the outcome of the journey through time we've been experiencing."

The video will continue to be sold for $10, to offset the cost of the copies that will be given to both school boards as part of the legacy of the event.

Copies are available at the Niagara Historical Museum gift shop, the Fort George gift shop, and the Town Hall in Virgil.

A fog machine made Market Square and Queen St. appear smoke–filled Saturday evening, and added to the realism of Niagara on Fire.
Photo supplied

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Christmas items, baked goods by Queenston residents on offer Saturday

Pre-ordered tourtieres and casseroles to be picked up

Penny Coles
Niagara Advance

Residents of Queenston have been baking up a storm for Saturday's Christmas Sale.

Tourtieres and chicken casseroles have been pre-ordered and can be picked up Saturday.

There are still some chicken casseroles available—call Marilyn Armstrong at 905-262-0268 or email her at armstrong@bellnet.ca.

Previous successful sales have funded new tables for the Queenston Library and plaques marking historic sites as the village celebrates its role in the War of 1812 bicentennial celebrations.

In addition to the bake sale, which provides "help for the busy holiday hostess," says organizer Vicki Lowenberger, the QRA will be offering gently used Christmas decorations for sale.

The Christmas bake sale will be held at the Queenston Library, 32 Queenston Street, Dec. 14 from 9 a.m. to noon.

Proceeds will go to the Queenston Residents' Association for special projects.

PENNY COLES
Niagara Advance

Queenston Residents' Association members Marilyn Armstrong, Dorie Barratt, Vicki Lowenberger, Susan Allen and Margaret Torrance prepare the Queenston Library for Saturday's Christmas Sale, which includes baked goods and Christmas items.

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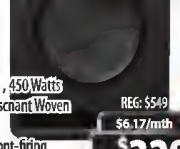

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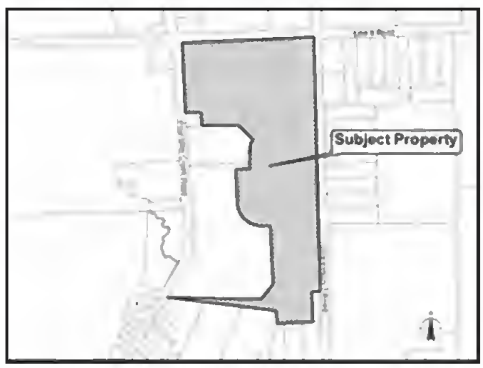
www.notl.org

RESCHEDULED MEETINGS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Line 9 @ Concession 3 - Cannery Subdivision – Zoning Amendment



PROPOSED CHANGE
To amend zoning regulations for lot coverage, height, garage setbecks, gerage door widths and yard encroachments, as well as to permit semi-detached units on twenty-nine more lots.

HAVE YOUR SAY
Input on any proposed matter is welcome and encouraged. You can provide input by speaking at the public meeting or by making e written submission to the Town.

PUBLIC MEETING
Date: **January 13, 2014**
Time: **7:00 p.m. or as soon as possible thereafter**
Place: **Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake**
Administration Offices, Council Chambers
1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil, Ontario

WRITTEN SUBMISSION
To provide input in writing, or to request personel notice if the proposed chenge is edopted, please send a letter c/o Town Clerk Holly Dowd, 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, P.O. Box 100, Virgil, Ontario, L0S 1T0.

MORE INFORMATION
For more information please contact Aaron Butler at 905-468-3266, extension 294 or abutler@notl.org. A copy of this notice can be found on the Town's website at **www.notl.org.**

LEGAL NOTICE
Section 34 of the Planning Act

If e person or public body does not make oral submissions at e public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of Niagere-on-the-Lake before this matter is passed, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Council to the Ontario Municipal Board.

If e person or public body does not make oral submissions at e public meeting, or make written submission to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake before this matter is passed, the person or public body may not be edded as e party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Municipal Board unless, in the opinion of the Board, there is reasoneble grounds to do so.

If you wish to be notified of the decision of Town Council in respect to this matter, you must make e written request to the Town Clerk.

Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Leke this 12th day of December 2013.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Niagara Stone Road - The Village Subdivision

PROPOSED CHANGE
To permit an increase for accessory building coverage from 15% to 23% on all residential multiple zones and a reduction in the depth of outdoor parking spots from 6 metres to 5.5 metres for parking spots backing onto a private alleyway, provided that there is one additional spot with a depth of at least 6 metres.

HAVE YOUR SAY
Input on any proposed matter is welcome and encouraged. You can provide input by speaking at the public meeting or by making a written submission to the Town.

PUBLIC MEETING
Date: **January 13, 2014**
Time: **7:00 p.m. or as soon as possible thereafter**
Place: **Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake**
Administration Offices, Council Chambers
1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil, Ontario

WRITTEN SUBMISSION
To provide input in writing, or to request personal notice if the proposed change is adopted, please send a letter c/o Town Clerk Holly Dowd, 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, P.O. Box 100, Virgil, Ontario, L0S 1T0. .

MORE INFORMATION
For more information please contact Jesse Auspitz at 905-468-3266, extension 258 or jauspitz@notl.org. A copy of this notice can be found on the Town's website at **www.notl.org.**

LEGAL NOTICE
Section 34 of the Planning Act

If e person or public body does not make oral submissions at e public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake before this matter is passed, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Council to the Ontar

If e person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting, or make written submission to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake before this matter is passed, the person or public body may not be added as e party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Municipal Board unless, in the opinion of the Board, there is reasonable grounds to do so.

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Dickens at St. Mark's

Volunteers from the Shaw Festival community will give a hardy boost to the holiday spirit at the annual dramatic reading of A Christmas Carol.

PENNY COLES
Niagara Advance

Guy Bannerman and Joy Janzen from the Shaw Festival acting ensemble and St. Mark's music director Michael Tansley will take part in A Christmas Carol reading at St. Mark's.

Shaw ensemble members—and in some cases, family members and administrative staff—have been volunteering their time for at least 15 years to offer the reading at Christmas.

The reading is at St. Mark's Church, traditionally on the last Sunday afternoon before Christmas.

The reading includes musical interludes, with Patty Jamieson and Peter Millard from the Shaw ensemble joining Shaw staff member Renata Difilipo and St. Mark's musical director Michael Tansley.

Guy Bannerman will be playing Scrooge, accompanied this season by Melanie Janzen and other Shaw ensemble members for the reading.

Bannerman says his first role in A Christmas Carol dates back to 1982, in Calgary, when he narrated the story through the voice of Charles Dickens.

He's taken part in the readings since.

"I'm quite familiar with Scrooge," he says.

He thinks of Scrooge as someone who moved away from human contact to make money, but rediscovered the humanity he possessed.

"He offers us a choice, to become an example of generosity, that was needed then and unfortunately is still needed today. In the beginning, he denies his family and chooses to pursue a life dedicated to making money. But in the end he rediscovers his family and shows us the simple kinds of joy that are available to us if we choose to follow his example."

The reading of A Christmas Carol takes place at St. Mark's Sunday, Dec. 22 at 3 p.m. Proceeds benefit Bethlehem Housing and Support Services. Tickets are $15 for adults and $8 for children and are available at the Festival Theatre box office, 905-468-2172, or at the door Sunday.

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MIKE DIBATTISTA QMI Agency Niagara
Ric Reidand Will Vickers star in Lyndesfarne Theatre Projects' production of The 39 Steps. It opens Thursday, Dec. 12, at the Seneca Queen Theatre in Niagara Falls.

39 Steps: Python meets Hitchcock

John Law
QMI Agency Niagara

Alfred Hitchcock is coming to downtown Niagara Falls, but not in the way you'd think.

Opening Thursday at the Seneca Queen Theatre, Patrick Barlowe's The 39 Steps takes a Monty Python approach to the classic 1935 Hitchcock film, using just four actors to play dozens of characters.

For Lyndesfarne Theatre Projects, it's the return of the company's most successful production. When first staged in 2011 (the company's last season in St. Catharines), people would leave the theatre and immediately buy tickets to see it again.

See Page 29

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Lyndesfarne future rides on send–up of film noir

From Page 28

Artistic director Kelly Daniels hopes to see that again, especially after the season opener Shirley Valentine struggled to find an audience. Lyndesfarne's future in Niagara Falls is riding on it.

"It's something awesome that Niagara doesn't have and we need more of it,' she says. "So many companies are trying to make a go of it.

"People, for whatever reason, just won't come to the theatre. They need to re-explore it."

The 39 Steps is a good start. Directed by Daniels, it stars Ric Reid, Will Vickers, Gray Powell and Marla McLean – all Shaw Festival veterans – in a variety of roles for some tongue-in-cheek melodrama. The plot clings close to the Hitchcock film, but everything is played for laughs instead of thrills.

"It's amazing," says Powell, who starred alongside McLean in Lady Windermere's Fan at Shaw this year.

"It will be a workout for all of us. It's a fun, fun show."

The newly-married McLean normally returns home to the east coast for Christmas, but is staying in Niagara-on-the-Lake this year. Working with her Shaw costars for another company is like a Christmas bonus.

"The company itself, we all know each other well and have worked together," she says

"We knew it would be a fun endeavour."

After reading the script for The 39 Steps, she knew it was a "work of art."

"There's some comic genius in it, and the physical comedy is pretty spectacular. To send up the film noir aspect of the movie is a great treat."

Adapted by English comedian Patrick Barlowe, the show was an immediate hit when it premiered in London, England in 2006. It opened on Broadway in 2008 and closed two years later after 771 performances - the longest-running show on Broadway at the time.

Daniels and her husband Reid saw the show four years ago in London and knew she had to have it.

"It was just...oh my God, we have to do this," she recalls. "So we did, at the Sullivan Mahoney (Theatre, in St. Catharines). We had a fantastic cast and it was our biggest-selling show."

john.law@sunmedia.ca

WHAT: The 39 Steps
WHERE: Seneca Queen Theatre, 4624 Queen St., Niagara Falls
WHEN: Dec. 12 to 29
TICKETS: $15 to $35.
www.ltpniagara.com

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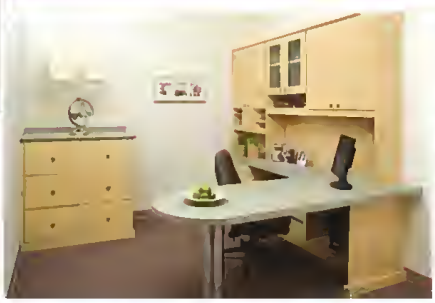

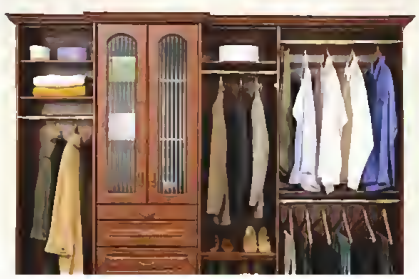

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Kristlemas Market at Stratus

Laura Levitt of Deja Vu Design of Erin, Ont. loves the markets at Stratus. The one-stop shopping opportunity will be held Dec. 15, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and will bring artisans, chefs, gourmet food trucks, musicians and the community to the winery on Niagara Stone Rd. It will also have a craft area for kids. Photo supplied

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Town flag, coat of arms unveiled

Brock's Monument ion the new town coat of arms is an important local landmark, commemorating the Battle of Queenston Heights in 1812. Gorgets were worn by British Army officers until 1830, and the one on the lion alludes to the regiment's leader, Captain John Butler, who farmed in Niagara and is buried in the town. The other lion wears a medal as a reference to the medals bearing the King's effigy given to First Nations chiefs in recognition of their alliance with the Crown.

Lord Mayor Dave Eke, accompanied by Bishop Ralph Spence, representing the Chief Herald of Canada,, were officially unveiling a new town flag and coat of arms Tuesday at the Courthouse.

Following the official proclamation ceremony, a procession, led by the Fort George Fife and Drum Corps with an honour guard from the 809 Newark Squadron Air Cadets, was to witness the raising of the flag.

The procession then was to continue to St. Mark's Church for a special service commemorating the burning of Niagara.

"We thought this was a fitting date to introduce a symbol of hope and promise given the devastation that occurred exactly 200 years to the day, the burning of our town," said Eke. "From ashes comes rebirth and hope."

Spence, who served as bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Niagara from 1998 to 2008, is the Albion Herald of Arms Extraordinary, an officer of arms at the Canadian Heraldic Authority in Ottawa.

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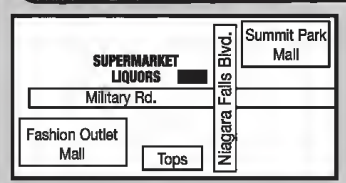

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Amaretto or Raspberry Di Amore Gift Set $8.99 750 ml	Rum Chata Rum Cream Gift Set $16.99 750ml	Chivas Regal 12 Yr Scotch Gift Set $31.99 750 ml
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www.graceunitedchurch.com
Minister: Rev. Laura Borgerson
10:30 am Sunday Service
Music Director: Esther Giesbrecht
Parking passes are available at the Church

CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH
1570 Niagara Stone Rd.
www.ccchurch.ca • 905-468-7155
Sunday, December 15th
9:30 am: 1st Service & CE
(childcare provided during entire service),
10:30 am: Coffee Time; 11:00 am: 2nd Service
(childcare provided mid-way through service)
Message by: Jeff Martens
Our Truer & Better Priest

GateWay Community Church
(P.A.O.C.)
1665 Four Mile Creek Road • 905-468-8971
Sunday, December 15th 10:30 a.m.
December Theme:
'A Month of Celebration'
Pastor Dave Tunikaitis Ministering
www.gatewaycc.ca: check here for events and podcasts.

BETHANY MENNONITE CHURCH
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11:00 am Sunday School
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905-468-3505 • www.vaxxine.com/bethany/

VILLAGE Bible Church
St. Davids Public School Meeting at 1344
York Road, St. Davids
289-296-9036
Sunday, December 15th
10:00am Coffee Time + 10:30am
Worship Service
Village Kidz (ages 1 - grade 5)
He Will Be Called..... Everlasting Father
Pastor Greg Alderton
www.villagebiblechurch.ca

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Message: Immanuel
Pastor Rick Mills
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lif abundantf llowship@gmail com

www.orchardparkbiblechurch.org
ORC ARD PARK
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434 Hunter Rd.
905-468-5731
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Worship Service 10:40 am
Message by Pastor Jim Evans
Jesus Is The Life
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Christmas Eve Service ~ 7 pm

Niagara United Mennonite Church
"Called to be Servants of Christ In Our Community"
10:00 am German Service
Message by Renate Klaasen
11:00 am Worship Service
Message by Stephen Cox
"God Speaks Into Silence"
Luke 1:11-20, 57-79
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Stephen Cox
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905-468-3313
http://www.redbrickchurch.ca

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10:30am Choral Eucharist
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Pastor Larry Ritter

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The Standard THE TRIBUNE NIAGARA FALLS REVIEW

Rangers take silver in U.S.

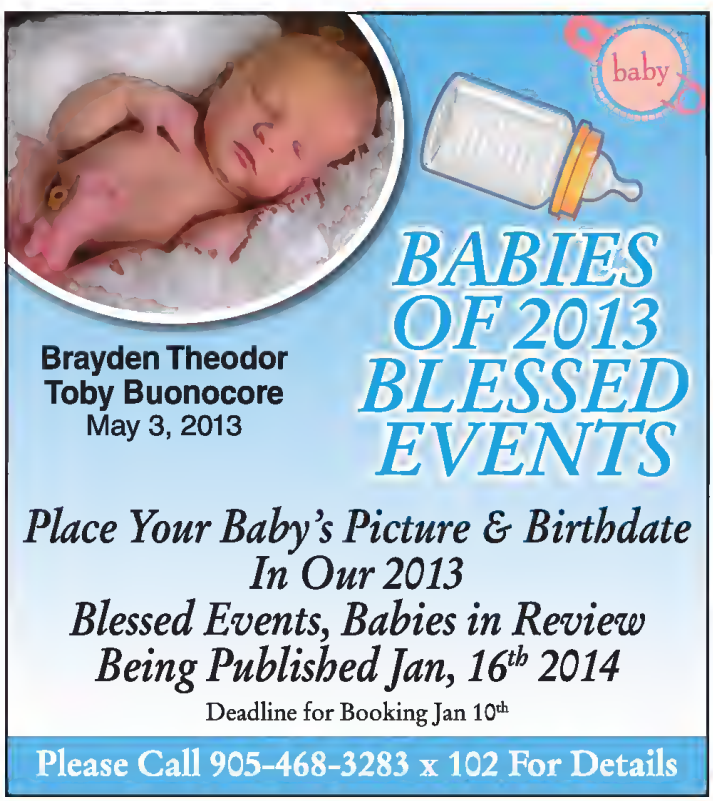
The Niagara Rangers major atom girls basketball team played three gripping contests in the Fairport, NY Great Lakes Invitational to come home with silver.

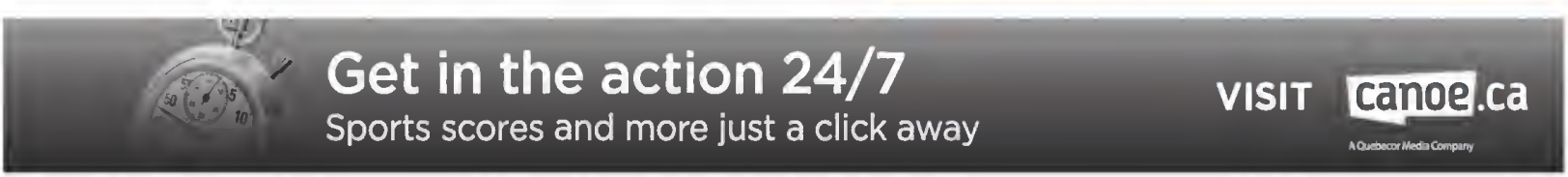
The gold medal game was an intense battle against Oswego, teams matching each other step by step. The Rangers Co-operators Ashley Harris had a big game on the boards as did Chiara van der Zalm and Maddie Crosbie. Van der Zalm and Logan Brown were the big percentage shooters both hitting 50%, however, high turnovers played a big part in this game as the Rangers gave the ball away too many times.

With seven seconds remaining, Crosbie scored to move Rangers to within one point, but Oswego held on to win the gold medal 24 - 23.

The girls started the tournament with a thrilling encounter against Stoney Creek. A hard-fought game saw the Rangers carry a slim lead well into the third quarter when Stoney Creek jumped in front and opened up a four point gap. Under pressure, Rangers' Logan Brown scored one from the free throw line. Julia Colavecchia scored on the rebound. With the clock showing two seconds left and the Rangers down by one, Colavecchia pounced on the inbound pass and scored to win the game by one point.

The second game against local rivals Pelham was a riveting affair that was also decided in the last seconds. Entering the final period with the score tied, the Rangers went on their biggest offensive run of the game, scoring six points and taking the lead 27-25 with one second remaining, sending them to the gold medal game.





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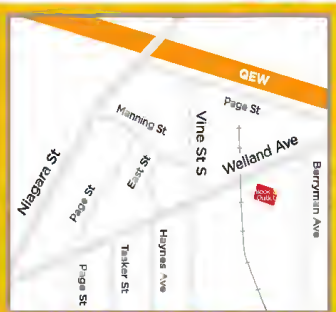

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The bantam Wolves came home champions after winning four games and tying one to take them to the final, where they won gold against an undefeated team.
Photo submitted

Bantam Wolves play best game of season to take championship game 3–1

Five hard-fought games lead to gold at South Muskoka Invitational

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Minor Hockey Association bantam Wolves defeated the Port Colborne Sailors 1-0 to win the South Muskoka Bears Invitational Hockey Tournament.

Jake Vanderveen tapped in the rebound from David Campbell's point shot to give Niagara the win.

The Wolves opened the tournament with a 3-1 win over Port Hope Phantoms. Josh Bush, Braeden Rawsthorne and Vanderveen scored for Niagara while goalie Alex Read picked up the win.

In their second game, Niagara lost in overtime 3-2 to Caledonia Thunder with Jackson Maves and Bush scoring for Niagara with Kyle Dickson in the net.

Niagara had to play short-handed in their third game as Bush and Maves left to play in the Metro Bowl football competition.

The team played an outstanding game against the Huntsville Otters to an overtime 2-2 tie with Vanderveen scoring twice.

Then Niagara had to wait to see if a 1-1-1 record would qualify for them the championship round. Port Hope beat Caledonia 2-1 in OT giving Niagara a birth into the semi-finals against the undefeated Kincardine Flyers.

The team played their best game of the season, beating the undefeated Kincardine Flyers 3-1 to move into the championship game against Port Colborne. Vanderveen, Bush and Maves scored for Niagara with Read picking up the win.

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Novice boys win 3–on–3 tourney

Four wins and a tie put them in first place for the weekend

The Bridgman andDuerkson novice Rangers took first place in the Pelham's second annual 3 on 3 basketball tournament last weekend.

The Rangers started out by tying the first game but then rallied for the next four games winning 6-2, 7-1, 7-3 and 6-0.

That put the Rangers into the final game against the Red Raiders from Niagara Falls.

The Rangers fought hard under the boards and made some key shots, ending up taking first place with a 7-5 victory.

Luca Valvano, Lukas Klassen, Aiden Laun and Carter Stoutenburg of the novice Rangers had a good weekend in Pelham in their 3-on-3 tournament. With them is coach Red Klassen.

Photo submitted

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Lovely 2 bdrm home w/many updates including Kitchen, bath, roof, furnace, window and wiring.

WRAP IT UP FOR CHRISTMAS

$419,000

827 NIAGARA STONE RD.

2 Storey, 4 bdrm home with 40' x 28' heated workshop plus attached garage. Good home business possibility. Triple wide drive , gazebo with hot tub.

NEW LISTING

BEV WIEBE* 289-407-5899

$429,900

644 EAST WEST LINE

Lovely country home on 5 acres. 3 bedroom brick bungalow, with large finished basement. Barn with loft, equipment garage and bonus potting shed.

MUST BE SEEN!!!

DAVID SHEARER* 905-468-4214

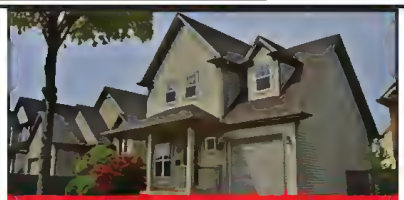
OPEN HOUSE SAT & SUN 2-4 PM

16 SANDALWOOD COMMON, ST. CATHARINES

New Bungalow Townhomes-several designs to choose from single and double garages-select your own finishes-low fees for lawn cutting and snow removal-pricing starts at **$278,000**

79 PARKSIDE DRIVE, ST. CATHARINES

Off Broadway - Port Weller - Build your new home in Broadway Gardens - Several premium lots to choose from - Quality Built by Grey Forest Homes Starting at **$289,900**



46 FRONTIER DRIVE VILLAGE OF VIRGIL

Quick closing possible - Open concept living area with Elmwood Kitchen - New flooring on main level and bonus room above Garage - 3 bedrooms -3 bathrooms - finished family Room in lower level and bathroom **$329,000**

24 RAIANA DRIVE CENTENNIAL PARK

Spacious family home backing onto Centennial Park- 4 Bedrooms - 4 bathrooms - finished lower level - main floor laundry and double car garage - large pie shaped lot with extensive decking and hot tub **$489,900**

Helen Mosca* helenmosca@royallepage.ca 905-650-5669
Aaron Cherney* aaronc@royallepage.ca 905-401-7915 • 1-800-635-9228

$819,000

129 JOHNSON

Prestigious home in the heart of old Town. 4 bed, 4 bath, finished basement as well as a spacious and airy in-law suite featuring second kitchen + laundry. Large lot with mature trees, take a look through the Virtual tour for more appreciation.

$569,000

19 GORING WAY

Newly constructed St. David's bungalow features 8' doors throughout, Butler's Pantry, main floor bedrooms with ensuites, separate Dining room and double attached garage. Be the envy of your friends and colleagues.

Stefan Regier

905-468-4214

stefan@royallepage.ca

125 Queen Street

Direct 289-257-6744

1452 Creek Road $1,175,000

A builder's pride and a wife's keen eye have coalesced to produce an outstanding family home on the banks of Four Mile Creek. 5pacious rooms, soaring ceilings and natural high end materials and finishes give one a sense of awe at every turn. The entire rear yard with pool is fenced overlooking the conservation area and Four Mile Creek.

KEVAN O'CONNOR** - 905-641-5844

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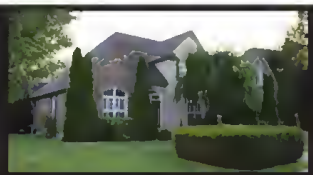

50 James Street $749,000

An exceptional family home located in a prime position at the end of a quiet cul-de-sac. Inside, the large great room sets the tone for this dramatic, open space. Gleaming hardwood floors throughout, multiple-built ins, and an exquisite kitchen, featuring granite counters, modern backsplash and high-quality appliances. Main floor master bedroom suite, complete with vaulted ceilings, walk-in closet, whirlpool bath, shower and his and her sinks. The second level offers 2 more bedroom suites. Don't miss out on this absolutely stunning, first-class home.

JAMES O'CONNOR* - 905-327-5589

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CANADA'S

CHRISTMAS

STORE

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SAVE 60%

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Reg $1,799.99

SALE $719.99

LIVESTRONG® LS10T Treadmill

SAVE

#84-0510

Reg $2,099.99

SALE $839.99

LIVESTRONG® LS13T Treadmill

SAVE 60%

#84-0511-6

Reg $2,499.99

SALE $999.99

LIVESTRONG® LSPro2 Treadmill

SAVE 60%

Reg $3,999.99

#84-0512-2

SALE $1,599.99

LIVESTRONG LS15.0T Treadmill

SAVE 60%

Reg $3,099.99

#84-0591-2

SALE $1,239.99

HORIZON CT9.3 Treadmill

SAVE 60%

Reg $2,199.99

#84-0562-2

SALE $879.99

Tempo 622T Treadmill

SAVE 50%

Reg $999.99

#84-0560-6

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Weslo Cadence R 5.2 Treadmill

Reg $399.99

#84-0586-6

ProForm 110R Recumbent Exercise Bike

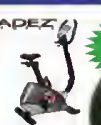
SAVE 50%

Reg $399.99

#84-0541-2

SALE $199.99

Bladez Fitness U250 Upright Exercise Bike



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Bladez Fitness U250 Upright Exercise Bike

SAVE 50%

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SAVE 60%

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ST. CATHARINES	ST. CATHARINES	NIAGARA FALLS	ST. CATHARINES	NIAGARA FALLS	FORT ERIE	PORT COLBORNE	WELLAND
905 227-7431	905 688-0488	905 358-0131	905 882-9275	905 354-3848	905 871-1504	905-835-1155	905-732-7501

CANADIAN TIRE

CANADA'S

CHRISTMAS

STORE

SAVE UP TO 72%

CHRISTMAS SALE

KitchenAid Metallic Artisan® Stand Mixer

#43-1404-2 #43-1405-2 #43-1406 #43-1407 #43-1408 #43-1409

SAVE 30% Reg $499.99 SALE $349.99

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SAVE 70%

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Ninja Professional Blender

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SAVE 50%

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Hamilton Beach Electric Knife with Case

SAVE 50%

#43-2308-6

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Hamilton Beach Cool-Wall 2-Slice Toaster

SAVE 50%

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Reg $19.99 SALE $15.99

GLENDALE AVE	WELLAND AVE.	MCLEOD RD.	LOUTH ST.	MONTROSE RD.	GARRISON RD.	WEST SIDE DR.	PRIMEWAY DRIVE
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